Application No. 09/447,259   Docket No.: 03042/000G691-US0
Response to Restriction Requirement with Traverse dated March 7, 2006
Reply to Restriction Requirement dated February 24, 2006

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4, 6 - 9, 40, 43 - 49, 52, 54 - 57, 88, 91 - 98, 103 - 161, 164 - 181, 184 - 194, 201 - 205 and 208 - 215 are presently pending. Applicants amend claim 149 as to informalities. No new matter is introduced.

In the Office Action of February 24, 2006, the present application is restricted to one of two claim groups:

1) Group I, consisting of claims 1, 4, 6 - 9, 40, 43 - 49, 52, 54 - 57, 88, 91 - 98, 103 - 161, 164 - 181, 184 - 194, 201 - 205 and 208; and

2) Group II, consisting of claims 209 - 215.

Applicants provisionally elect Group I, directed to claims 1, 4, 6 - 9, 40, 43 - 49, 52, 54 - 57, 88, 91 - 98, 103 - 161, 164 - 181, 184 - 194, 201 - 205 and 208, with traverse, and withdraw the unelected claims of Group II, claims 209 - 215, from consideration.

The Examiner finds that the present invention as claimed includes claims directed to two distinct subcombinations as reflected by the above two claim groups, and restricts the present application to one of the two subcombinations. Applicants respectfully disagree with this finding.

MPEP § 806.05(d) states:

Two or more claimed subcombinations, disclosed as usable together in a single combination, and which can be shown to be separately usable, are usually restrictable when the subcombinations <u>do not overlap in scope</u> and are not obvious variants.

(Emphasis added)

Applicants' claimed invention is directed to a system and method for providing answers to one or more questions posed to one or more experts by one or more users. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims assigned to the above two claim groups are not respectively restricted to subcombinations with no overlap in scope. For example, claim 88, which is assigned to claim Group I, recites:

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88. A system executed by a server for providing answers on one or more topics from a set of experts on each topic to questions received from users via client interfaces in communication with the server, the server comprising:

a question receiving component configured to receive at the server a question on the selected topic from a user via one of the client interfaces;

a routing component configured to display the question in one of a plurality of locations, wherein each of said locations is accessible to only one expert of the set of experts and wherein each of the locations includes the question grouped as one of a set of questions, the groupings of questions being accessible to the one expert upon generation of the personal expert interface;

a command receiving component configured to receive at the server a command from the one expert in response to the question; and

an executing component configured to execute the command from the one expert.

Claim 215, which is assigned to claim Group II, recites:

215. A system executed by a server for providing answers on one or more topics from at least one expert on each topic to questions received from users via client interfaces, the client interfaces comprising a plurality of question and answer fora, the server being in communication with the client interfaces , the server comprising:

a question receiving component configured to receive at least two questions from the users via the client interfaces, each of the questions being posted from different fora;

a command receiving component configured to receive a request by the expert to access a personal expert interface, the personal expert interface being unique to the expert;

a display component configured to group the question with other questions for the expert to answer, the groupings of questions being accessible to the expert upon generation of the personal expert interface;

a second command receiving component configured to receive a command from the expert in response to one of the questions; and

an executing component configured to execute the command from the expert.

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The systems claimed by each of claims 88 and 215 share a number of components in common. For example, each claim of claims 88 and 215 claims: a) a question receiving component, b) a command receiving component, and c) an executing component. Accordingly, the inventions represented by claim 88 in claim Group I and by claim 215 in claim Group II cannot fairly be characterized as <u>subcombinations</u> which are <u>usable together in a single combination</u> and <u>do not overlap in scope</u>. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the restriction under MPEP § 806.05(d) is improper, and respectfully request that this restriction be withdrawn and that withdrawn claims 209 - 215 be reinstated.

<u>CONCLUSION</u>

Therefore, in view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully requested that a Notice of Allowance as to all pending claims be issued in this case.

If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Dated: March 7, 2006   Respectfully submitted,

By _____

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